



Communications Director Opening

Iowa Association for Justice

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

The Iowa Association for Justice (IAJ) is seeking a communications director to design, implement, oversee and evaluate public relations (PR) and communications programs for the association.

OVERVIEW

The communications director is the prime mover for the association's public relations (PR) and communications programs, all of which aim to build public understanding of and appreciation for our justice systems.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The communications director will take the lead on designing, implementing, overseeing and evaluating various PR and communications activities, in order to achieve the following objectives:

- Inventive exploitation of “new” media venues and forums, in order to excite interest among younger voters and others who bypass “old” media outlets.
- Intensive interaction and engagement with print and broadcast journalists — including the capitol/political press corps — in order to develop an expansive and effective “old” media presence.
- Extensive and elaborate public education, in order to move and shape public opinion.
- Sustained and effective participation in the American Association for Justice communications campaign, in order to maximize local impacts of national media advocacy.
- Concerted communications collaborations with allied organizations, in order to add new voices and amplify our message.
- Rapid responses to disparaging news stories and disinformation, in order to bust myths, dispel misperceptions and set the record straight.
- Clear and consistent messaging — both internally and externally — in order to generate a cogent and coherent message stream.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

The communications director reports to the executive director and is principally responsible for performance of the following assignments:

- Establishing a “new” media presence, via podcasts, blogs, social media and other web-based communications venues.
- Conducting “old” media advocacy campaigns (involving association leaders and members from across the state and building relationships with journalists along the way), as follows:
 - Producing and placing opinion editorials and letters-to-the-editors of local newspapers.
 - Scheduling and staging editorial board visits.
 - Spearheading prompt and potent responses to negative news coverage.

- Developing and implementing strategic initiatives to get in front of news coverage of looming issues (in order to frame them positively and proactively).
 - Planning and conducting news conferences and press briefings.
 - Arranging appearances by association spokespersons on radio and TV public affairs programs.
- Synthesizing public opinion research and spearheading development and delivery of strategic messages to targeted constituencies (e.g., elected officials, opinion makers and the general public).
 - Designing and facilitating media and communications trainings for association members and their clients (in order to develop capable and compelling messengers).
 - Staffing and supporting the public education committee (in order to extend the reach and expand the scope of the association's PR and communications initiatives).
 - Sharing advice with and imparting expertise to the entire association staff team (in order to enhance and upgrade the quality and efficacy of marketing and messaging at all levels of the organization).

The executive director may alter these assignments at any time, and may assign other duties from time-to-time.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND ABILITIES

The following skills and abilities are essential requirements for this position:

- Affinity for legal issues and absolute commitment to the cause of justice for all.
- Familiarity and facility with new media and information technologies.
- Ability to work well under pressure and meet deadlines.
- Ability to assimilate and articulate complicated information and complex issues.
- Ability to build productive relationships, be at ease and develop rapport with all kinds of personality-types.
- Ability to work well as part of a team, while also taking individual initiative.
- Ability to plan and organize strategic communications and earned media campaigns.
- Excellent writing and oral communication skills are a must.
- Background and experience in the media and/or PR communications fields is a plus.
- Political and/or legislative campaign experience is desirable.

This is a full-time, salaried position, based in Des Moines, Iowa (salary commensurate with experience; good benefits; great office environment). Qualified applicants should submit resume and cover letter (by June 30) to info@iowajustice.org.

Headquartered in Des Moines, IAJ is an organization of nearly one thousand Iowa attorneys who fight for justice in courtrooms and communities across the state. The association serves the legal profession and the public through its efforts to strengthen our justice systems, promote injury prevention, and foster the disclosure of information critical to the health and safety of all Iowa families.